

Stay Connected... to State Government

House of Representatives	232-9600
Senate	232-9400
Office of the Governor	232-4567
Do Not Call List	888-834-9969
Indiana State Library	800-451-6028
Road Condition Hotline	800-261-7623
Department of Veterans Affairs	800-400-4520
Attorney General Consumer Protection Division	800-382-5516
State Information Center	800-457-8283

Contact
Representative
Carolene Mays
District 94



Statehouse
200 W. Washington
Indianapolis, IN 46204
232-9600

Online
H94@in.gov
www.in.gov/H94



Representative Carolene Mays

Will you be able to vote?

Due to new state laws, you will be required to have a valid Indiana state picture ID to vote. Please visit



my website, www.in.gov/H94, to learn more about this law and how to obtain an identification card and rules concerning absentee voting.

Representative Carolene Mays
Indiana House of Representatives
200 W. Washington
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Prst Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Indiana House of
Representatives

Working for You



Helping Hoosier Families



Property Tax Relief



2006 Session Report

Additional Property Tax RELIEF

At the start of the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, property tax relief was identified as a priority by members of both parties. When the smoke cleared, we were able to provide some relief for homeowners.

This year, about 1.5 million homeowners will receive a one-time increase in the state homestead credit from 20 to 28 percent. This credit will provide around \$100 million in property tax relief in 2006.



In 2007, the state homestead deduction will increase from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for one year only. This relief will provide an additional \$127 million in relief for homeowners.

Starting in 2008, the state will gradually phase in a cap on property tax bills at two percent of a home's value. This cap would apply to all classes of property in Indiana, starting in 2010.

While this relief is welcome, it still does not make up for the massive increases in local property taxes that were passed on to home and business owners through the biennial state budget approved in 2005 by the majority party. At the time, that budget—which I voted against—increased the burden on local property taxpayers to the tune of an estimated \$850 million.

Indiana tightens eminent domain law

Improving protection for homeowners

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can use the process of eminent domain to take private property, such as homes and businesses, in order to hand it over to a private developer.

Indiana lawmakers immediately began working on a plan to protect the property rights of Hoosiers. Months of bipartisan work has resulted in legislation that tightens Indiana's eminent domain laws and restricts the ability of most government units to seize private property and transfer it to private entities for development.

The new legislation sets strict standards for property acquisition through eminent domain, and limits its use to only truly blighted and decaying properties. This will prevent a developer from being able to have a local government use eminent domain to seize your property simply because they think it might be a good spot for a new retail development or strip mall.

It received unanimous support, but there are still potential problems that need to be addressed. Most troublesome is the fact that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is exempt from complying with the new restrictions.

There are concerns that INDOT will use this exemption to seize property for some of the road privatization projects proposed by the governor, such as the Interstate 69 extension or other unannounced projects in other areas of the state.



Rep. Mays speaks during a resolution on the House floor.

Improvements to Education

Education remains one of the most important topics we address at the Indiana General Assembly, and the 2006 session saw several improvements, as much for what we didn't pass as what we did.



During the 2006 session, there was an attempt to move the ISTEP test from the fall to the spring of the school year. This move was opposed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Suellen Reed and others who felt the change was too costly and that it would not help in identifying students having problems and providing remediation for them. After much debate, it was decided to make ISTEP reforms the subject of a comprehensive study by the Indiana Department of Education.

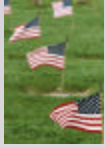
New legislation reinstates Indiana's Mentor Teacher Program, which provides professional support to veteran teachers who help in professional development of younger colleagues. Another bill offers high school dropouts the chance to earn their diplomas through the Fast Track program.

Indiana continues to move forward with its improved health initiative, which encourages healthier eating habits among school children by requiring school vending machines to offer more "better choice" food items.

I am very pleased that we were able to delay an effort to deregulate public education by eliminating hundreds of state laws on instruction and operation of our schools. Many of us feared this change would have caused funding to be eliminated for programs in such areas as early childhood intervention, summer school, vocational education and substance abuse prevention.

A summary of new legislation

FUNERAL PROTESTS



New legislation increases the penalty for disorderly conduct occurring near the location of a funeral, memorial service, or viewing. The bill is largely in response to a group from Kansas that has chosen to stage protests at the funerals of Hoosier soldiers killed in action, using the occasion to make a political statement.

SEX OFFENDERS

A series of bills continue our state's efforts to crack down on sex offenders. The bills clarify the designation of "sexually violent predator," require sex offenders to wear GPS tracking devices, establish lifetime parole for these offenders, ban sex offenders' access to locations where children may be present, keep better track of sex offenders' whereabouts with the new DOC sex offender registry, and make the crime of human trafficking of a minor a felony.

HOME IMPROVEMENT FRAUD

The circumstances under which home improvement fraud can now be prosecuted have been expanded. The bill increases the penalties for home improvement fraud if the improvements were made on the property of a senior citizen or if more than two clauses of home improvement laws were violated.

TELECOM REFORM

Passed with bi-partisan support, the new law allows statewide cable franchising and decreases regulations that have discouraged companies from investing in cable TV and broadband services. Provisions were placed in the bill to protect consumer's basic phone service rates. This puts Indiana on the forefront of telecom reform.

SCHOOL SAFETY

We have attempted to ensure the safety of schoolchildren and to protect school employees by making possession of a knife on school property or a school bus a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to a 180-day prison term or a fine of \$1,000.

MAJOR MOVES



The 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly will be remembered for Major Moves, the governor's program to lease the Indiana Toll Road for \$3.8 billion to a foreign group for the next 75 years. The implications of Major Moves will be felt in Indiana for years to come. If anything, more time was needed to fully analyze the impact of Major Moves.